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DE RUEHSK #1404/01 3251410
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 211410Z NOV 05
FM AMEMBASSY MINSK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3348
INFO RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 3211
RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KIEV 3001
RUEHVL/AMEMBASSY VILNIUS 3425
RUEHRA/AMEMBASSY RIGA 1464
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 3089
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 0758
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS MINSK 001404

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [BO](#)

SUBJECT: GOB: "We're Peaceful, Friendly"

REF: MINSK 1384

1. Summary and comment: In recent weeks Belarusian state owned television has aired several hostile and tendentious "news" programs accusing U.S. diplomats of espionage, orchestrating the political opposition, and trying to destabilize Belarus. State owned newspapers have carried similar stories (reftel). GOB officials have also publicly accused the United States of conducting a "propaganda war" and of trying to overthrow the Belarusian government. These acts are clearly Belarusian propaganda aimed at manipulating the upcoming presidential elections. The Embassy formally complained about such vitriolic and irresponsible statements in a letter from the Ambassador to the Foreign Minister and in a diplomatic note. The GOB replied in a diplomatic note that Belarus is a "peaceful" state seeking "friendly" relations with everyone. However, the note regrets the "systematic highly offensive, false and provocative allegations and actions of the U.S. highest officials toward Belarus [sic]." End summary and comment.

2. Begin text of Belarusian response (presented in English):

Note No. 12-06/25650-H
Minsk, 11 November 2005

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America in the Republic of Belarus and referring to H.E. Ambassador George Krol's letter dated 27 October 2005 and Embassy's Note N 316/05 dated 28 October 2005 has the honor to inform the Embassy that the Republic of Belarus is conducting a peaceful foreign policy aimed at forming and developing in-depth friendly relations with all states ready for equal and mutually respectful dialogue.

During the meeting of the Security Council of the Republic of Belarus on 30 September 2005 the President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko stated that there is no direct security threat to Belarus. Not giving up its national interest in the sphere of security the Republic of Belarus is striving for partnership relations with all countries, international organizations and alliances without any exclusion.

The republic of Belarus rejects information wars as a tool to achieve foreign policy goals. We note with regret that systematic highly offensive, false and provocative allegations and actions of the U.S. highest officials toward Belarus and its leadership do not contribute to creation of confidence and productive bilateral co-operation between Belarus and the United States on these principles.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the United States of America in the Republic of Belarus the assurances of its high consideration.

End text.

13. Begin text of U.S. diplomatic note of October 28:

No. 316/05

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus and has the honor to draw the Ministry's attention to the statements of Belarusian State Security Committee deputy chairman, Vasily Dementey as reported in the attached Interfax report dated October 27. The United States Government finds the comments of this representative of Belarusian security services to deputies of the Belarusian parliament highly offensive, false and provocative. The United States is not seeking and has never sought the destabilization of Belarus by any means let alone "up to the point of intervention," as the BKGB deputy chairman allegedly said.

The United States wishes to protest these comments and request clarification from the Ministry whether they represent the views of the government of Belarus. Such statements by a Belarusian official would only further the destructive course the government of Belarus is taking toward relations with the United States and the other nations mentioned in the referenced press statements. Moreover, these statements negatively influence Belarusian society's attitude toward the United States and these other countries, who only desire Belarus to become a democratic, peaceful, prosperous country enjoying the best of relations with its neighbors and the broader world community. The United States has always, and continues to, respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Belarus.

The Embassy of the United States of America avails itself of the opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs assurances of its highest consideration.

End text.

14. Begin text of letter from Ambassador to Foreign Minister Martynov (translated from Belarusian):

Embassy of the United States of America
Minsk, October 28, 2005

I am attaching a copy of the article published in the state newspaper Gomelskaya Pravda last month. I believe it is worthy of your attention, being a typical example of the creative work by the Belarusian state mass media. These articles, along with a number of other recent newspaper publications and TV reports, caused a feeling of disgust in my colleagues and myself. The article describes normal activities carried out by diplomatic missions in every country, activities that are aimed at getting to know a country better and establishing contacts with a broad range of Belarusians, activities that the Belarusian leadership and you in particular have always encouraged us to do, as "cover."

It seems to me that such publications insult the Belarusian people in the first place, who, to my understanding, as taxpayers provide funding for most of the Belarusian media.

The hysteric and groundless anti-American rhetoric of the article almost surpasses the propaganda of the USSR during the Cold War. I am convinced that the authors, editors and curators of the Belarusian state media are well aware that the Cold War is over. However, they for some reason think it possible to convey exactly the opposite idea to well-educated Belarusian people. To my mind, the article in question is intended to intimidate Belarusians and prevent them from any contact with American diplomats.

I deem it necessary to once again dismiss any allegations made by the Belarusian leadership that the American government and American press has conducted a virulently anti-Belarusian campaign.

It is hard to see that such crude, self-destructive approaches by

the Belarusian authorities are aimed at anything else but self-isolation. It is unfortunate that this is happening in light of your constant affirmations to seek normal relations with the American people and government.

End text.

KROL